



MONTHLY UPDATE

Department of Children's Advocacy Monthly Update
Connecting with and updating our community



Happy New Year
FROM THE S.C. DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY

IN THIS ISSUE

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NEXT EDITION: JANUARY 31



A Message from the State Child Advocate and Executive Director



Happy New Year to you ~

As the year comes to a close, we reflect on the progress and accomplishments we made in 2021 and the ongoing opportunities to improve outcomes for children in 2022. Highlights from 2021 include:

- Guardian ad Litem Program's staff vacancy reduction from almost 40% in 2019 to a low of 8% in February of 2021. In addition to filling vacancies, new positions have been posted to recruit, train and support volunteers and reduce the workload for staff;

- Developing and launching our online [Resource Library](#) to raise awareness and improve access to services for children and families;

- DCA's collaboration with the [Office of Inspector General](#) for an efficiency study regarding the Foster Care Review Division and anticipation of onboarding a new Foster Care Review Division Director in January of 2022;

- [Continuum of Care's](#) implementation of the 1915(C) Medicaid waiver and a commitment to serve more children through High Fidelity Wraparound in 2022;

- Engaging in remote and in-person site visits, meetings, and court hearings to ensure that adequate services are provided for children by state agencies;

- Receiving more than 4000 calls in addition to online submissions through our [Investigations Unit](#);

- Creating capacity for more intentional system improvement concerning children's services including being awarded a [Title II Formula Juvenile Justice grant](#) and onboarding an Investigations Unit Director in January of 2022;

Shout out to the DCA team for demonstrating accountability, advocacy and service in 2021 and into 2022! To review the full [FY21 Annual Accountability Report](#), click [here](#).

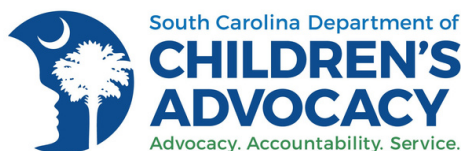
As we look toward January 2022, we are preparing for hearings concerning our FY23 budget requests and pending child-related bills in anticipation of the legislative session resuming. We have requested recurring and non-recurring state appropriations for the Foster Care Review Division, Continuum of Care, and Investigations Unit.

During 2021, we focused on suicide prevention, safe sleep awareness, justice-involved, mentally ill youth, and victims of human trafficking. I testified regarding the Student ID Suicide Prevention Act and the Child Abuse Response Protocol, and we are grateful that both of these bills were signed into law by Governor Henry McMaster this year. We plan to continue to provide testimony and input regarding bills that will impact the services provided by child-serving agencies, and our legislative priorities in this area are the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, Extension of Foster Care Services, and Kinship Care.

One of the most important focus areas concerns the service and placement array for children in South Carolina, and we have prioritized the conditions at DJJ's Broad River Road complex, guaranteed Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) access for seriously ill, justice-involved youth, and access to intensive, community-based services, including respite care. We will continue to work with other agencies and organizations to identify coordinated approaches to improve our system of care. I sincerely appreciate the cross-agency collaboration of so many people in our state who are working with urgency and empathy to create a sustainable system that improves outcomes for children and families in South Carolina.

Yours truly,

Amanda F. Whittle, J.D., CWLS



Shout-Out to S.C. Continuum of Care, Region A



Ja'Nae Middleton
S.C. Continuum of Care

Shout out to Continuum of Care (COC) Region A staff who received acknowledgements for the support and wonderful work they are providing through High Fidelity Wraparound care coordination services. Thank you and congratulations to Ja'Nae Middleton and Rhonda Durst for the comments they received from parents and guardians:

"I love Ja'Nae! She is always responsive when I need her."



Rhonda Durst
S.C. Continuum of Care

"Rhonda has been very helpful with collaborating with other service providers. She is persistent in helping us navigate through the system."

Welcome to Pickens County Coordinator



Mallory Doolittle
*Pickens County Program Coordinator II
Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program*

The Department of Children's Advocacy welcomes Mallory Doolittle to the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program. Mallory is the new County Program Coordinator II for Pickens County in Region 1.

Mallory has a passion for working with children and has been doing so in some capacity for the past 10 years. Mallory's previous experience includes working with the Department of Social Services and, most recently, with A Child's Haven.

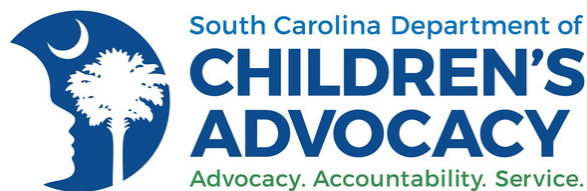
In her free time, Mallory enjoys traveling, hiking, going to the lake, and spending time with friends or doing anything outdoors.

Mallory is an avid Clemson football fan and you will likely hear her cheering, "Go Tigers!" when she attends Clemson games.

She is grateful for her past work experience and the opportunities she had to serve children in different communities. She is excited to join the Department of Children's Advocacy!



Join the DCA Team!



We have eight job openings at the Department of Children's Advocacy.

To learn more or to apply, click [here](#).

Agency and Organization Contact List

Department of Children's Advocacy

803-734-3176

Investigations Unit: 1-800-206-1957

Children's Law Center

803-777-1646

Children's Trust of South Carolina

803-733-5430

Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services

803-896-5555

Department of Disabilities and Special Needs

803-898-9600

Department of Health and Environmental Control

803-898-0124

Department of Health and Human Services

803-898-2580

Department of Juvenile Justice

803-896-9749

Department of Mental Health

803-898-8581

Mobile Crisis: 833-364-2274

Department of Social Services

General Information 803-898-7601

24-HR Abuse & Neglect Reporting Hotline: 1-888-CARE4US or 1-888-227-3487

Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe

864-391-2131

S.C. Network of Children's Advocacy Centers

803-576-7250

S.C. School for the Deaf and the Blind

864-577-7501

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School

896-6480